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Code-Switching in Gol & Gincu

Zurina Mohamed Nil^{a*}, Shamala Paramasivam^b^{ab}Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Malaysia

Abstract

There are a lot of research concerning code-switching, both in the local and international context. However, this study examines a different aspect of code-switching. It analyses the use of code-switching in the media specifically in a movie. The study aims to understand code-switching in the mediated form in a Malaysian movie; Gol & Gincu. The study examines the macro and micro functions of code-switching in this movie. It was found that some of the macro functions of code-switching included Speech Accommodation, Construction of Identity and to Exhibit Power. Within these macro functions, there were a variety of micro functions embedded within the discourse. The significance of the study is on how the macro and micro functions of code-switching in the movie Gol & Gincu may be reflective of code-switching in real life communication in Malaysian Society particularly the urban community

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1. Introduction

The movie Gol & Gincu is unlike any typical Malaysian movie because of the heavy use of code-switching (CS), even though the storyline is simple; the romantic relationship between Putri and Eddy has ended, with Eddy wanting changes in his life therefore Putri is determined to change herself in order to win Eddy back. The movie portrays the lifestyles of Kuala Lumpur's urban society, addressing issues and dilemmas faced by youth with a tinge of Malaysia humour.

Since Malaysians rarely go a whole day without code-switching, it can be interpreted as part of the Malaysian life. Haja Mohideen Mohamed Ali [5] wrote that mixing languages is very normal in non-monolingual societies

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +0-000-000-0000 ; fax: +0-000-000-0000 .

E-mail address: author@institute.xxx

and it is a linguistic fact of life. He was referring to Malaysian in his article. This practice was also observed by Jacobson [11], who wrote,

Code-switching comes so natural to them (Malaysian) that they engage into it for the mere pleasure of combining the two languages

Therefore it is logical to state that many Malaysians use at least two languages to communicate, and part of the communication practice is speech accommodation and to construct identities among the speakers. Gumperz [7] sees CS as a *discourse function* i.e. the function of personalization under the connotation of the 'we-code' to produce a conversational outcome. In short, CS is used as the mediator (language) between the participants in a communication. Speech accommodation essentially means accommodating other speaker(s) in the communication process. When a person subconsciously changes his/her style of speech (accent, rate, types of words, *code-switching*, etc.) towards the style used by the listener(s), the speaker is accommodating the listener(s). This usually shows the person's rapport signalling agreement, liking and/or approval or could be perceived as an act showing negativity. Zuraidah [18] also agrees that CS could be done for speech accommodation when the speaker communicates using the preferred code of the addressee.

Identity is understood as the fact of being or what a person is. Identity can also be connected to a group where they (the group members) share a close similarity or feeling of understanding among themselves. When a person uses codes-switching to further portray their identities, it gives the addresser and addressee a distinctive personal and/or group identity. The common view many Malaysians share is that the more proficient his English, the higher is his level of education.

In her article, *Code-switching for Power Building*, Jariah [7] made an interesting comment:

Mastery of English is not only viewed as a sign of one's intellectual development but also as a means by which one responds to one's experiences through improved thinking and communication skills.

In Malaysia, the term *Bahasa Rojak* has the same parallel meaning to CS. However, in the Harian Metro newspaper article in 2003, the Deputy Minister of Information Datuk Zainuddin Maidin stated that *Bahasa Rojak* is characterized as a mixture of other language(s) besides the Malay language in a sentence formation. However, if a presenter uses two or more languages, and for each respective language is in the form of a complete sentence(s), therefore it does not constitute as *Bahasa Rojak*.

3. The Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) was used to expand and explain the dialogue extracted from the movie. This method was utilized so that DA would be able to reveal the undisclosed messages behind the use of code-switching be it phrasal, word-choice or others. In a simplified manner, DA is used to interpret the problem (code-switching) in the text transcribed with the understanding that *every text is conditioned and inscribes itself within a given discourse* (the movie-genre). With regards to this paper, DA is considered as a matter of interpretation because the validity of this research was based on the logic of the researcher's assessments of the movie and how these ideas mirror closely to reality (as past studies conducted by other researchers reflects CS in real life). In addition to these, for this paper DA need not provide a conclusive justification as DA is not meant for "hard science". Social science via linguistics is a study where knowledge, facts, data or even insights are interchangeable and

constantly shifting according to situation at hand. Hence, the reason why scholars continuously commune to debate, argue and share their findings.

3.2 Framework Analysis

Functions of Code-switching

Through the use of DA, a tabulated list was formed to give a clearer view of how code-switching is being done and why it is being used in the movie *Gol & Gincu*. The functions of CS or situations ‘created’ in the movie for the functions of CS can be identified through:

Table 1: The list of Macro and Micro Functions of CS in *Gol & Gincu*

Macro Functions	Micro Functions (When the speaker(s) uses English words or phrases)
Speech Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to reiterate, repair and/or correct certain Malay words, terms or phrases - to clarify - to emphasize - to simplify - to coin/nativized
Construction of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish relationship - to establish solidarity - to create equality - to ascertain status

The purposes of code-switching compiled above are present in the movie *Gol & Gincu*. This is a case study of how a local movie reflects the urban society’s usage of code-switching in their daily conversation, especially the youths.

4. The Research Findings

4.1 The Actors and their Characters

The characters in this movie are mainly females due to the fact that this is a chick flick generic movie (this movie genre is aptly named due to its appeal to young women or teenagers). Based on the table below, it can be assumed that most of the casts are raised in urban society because of their familiarity of alternating both English and Bahasa Melayu languages. Some of the casts are likely from mix parentage (by either parent or grandparents) due to their names. In addition, the way the names are spelled and/or pronounced would also indicate ‘urban and/or foreign exposure’ that can only exist in urban society. As a result of their exposure to urban culture i.e. CS, their acting (conversing using English and Bahasa Melayu) is natural and fluid, not stoic nor stiff.

Table 2: The list of actors/actresses and their character in the movie *Gol & Gincu*.

Names	Characters
Nur Fazura Sharifuddin	Putri (P)
Sazlini Shamsul Falak	Shasha (S)
Ashraf Sinclair	Eddy (E)
Melissa Maureen Rizal	Mia (M)
Mohd Pierre Andre	Reza (Worker A)
Rafidah Abdullah	Zie (Z)
Sharifah Amani	Jiji (J)
Kartini Kamalul Ariffin	Sara (S)
Celina Khor	Ling (L)
Zarina Zainoordin	Dayang (D)
Bernice Chauly	Datin Aina (PM) / (Mum P)
Zahim Albakri	Uncle Izam (JF)
Ida Nerina	Kak Yan (JM)
Khatijah Tan	Pn.Fatimah (Jay's Mum)
Farrah Shamilla	J / Juita (Jay)
Anding Indrawani Zaini	Fiq (F)
Noor Anita Mohd Tahir	Aisyah (A)
Czacza Fayrouz	Emi (E)

4.2 Excerpt dialogues from the movie *Gol & Gincu*

The excerpts below were chosen to show the macro and micro functions of Speech Accommodation and Construction of Personal/Group Identity. Based on the excerpts given, the scenes were created so that conditions and/or situations are favourable for CS to occur. The micro functions are based on the macro functions. The conditions and/or situations created for CS is also based on the scripted dialogue. The dialogues were produced to give specific effects and results. These dialogue were used to imply clarification, emphasizing and/or reiterate a point, mocking, unity, establishing relationship, solidarity, identity, equality to the movie characters (between them and among them).

Table 3: Examples of Functions for Code-switching in the movie *Gol & Gincu*

Dialogue	Macro and Micro Functions for Code-switching
Scene 0:45 – 1:02	<u>Speech Accommodation:</u>
<u>Dinner at the restaurant</u>	Clarify – <i>I know</i>
L: mesti <i>minister</i> suka <i>design</i> you kan	Emphasize – <i>minister, design</i> you
P: <i>I know</i>	Coined/Nativized – <i>I, you</i>
M: cepatlah putri dah pukul berapa ni	Borrow - <i>darling don't blame me coz I'm beautiful</i>
L: <i>oh yeah wedding</i> tu hari ni kan <i>I'm sure you look fabulous</i>	
P: <i>darling don't blame me coz I'm beautiful</i>	<u>Construction of Group Identity:</u>
M: ah sabarnya	establish relationship
	establish solidarity
Scene: 6:28 – 8:35	<u>Speech Accommodation:</u>
<u>Dinner at the restaurant</u>	Clarify – <i>what, dependent</i>

P: sayang tengok ni bila I kawin nanti I nak pakai baju colour silver	Emphasize – colour silver, fly, cheerleader, striker, dependent,
ok tak sayang	Coined/Nativized – I, you, ok, yeah, striker
E: umm	Borrow - we had our fun, I'm taking care of you Eddy I'm your
P: hmm	cheerleader
E: putri	Simplify – fly, breakup, life
P: yeah	
E: you kan tahun depan kita nak fly pegi Australia kan	<u>Construction of Group Identity:</u>
P: yeah	establish relationship – a degree of familiarity based on
E: sebelum kita fly umm kita patut	endearment (babe), pronouns, and constant change of languages
P: bertunang lapse	
E: breakup	
P&E: what (together)	
E: ahh	
P: why	
E: umm putri we had our fun tapi you ni dependent sangat	
P: dependent	
E: look babe I rasa terkongkong tau mana I pegi apa I buat semua you	
nak ikut macammacam you takde life sendiri	
P: I'm taking care of you Eddy I'm your cheerleader	
E: I dah bosan dengan cheerleader I nak cari I nak cari striker I nak	
borak dengan you pun I tak tau nak cakap apa	
P: fine you nak borak you nak borak pasal apa	
E: putri	
P: what you nak borak kan go on try me	
E: ok you tau I punya fantasy football you rasa sapa I patut tukar	
damian duff morientes	
or gilberto mana satu	
P: hmm it's not fair Eddy	
E: look babe kita boleh terus macam ni lagi dua tiga tahun nanti kita	
kawin tapi sepuluh	
tahun lepas tu bila I dah boring sangat I tak tau nak buat apa-apa nanti	
I kawin isteri kedua tu macam bapak I buat tu tu ke yang you nak	

During the entire movie, certain English pronouns, discourse markers, verbs, adjectives and affirmations are repeatedly used such as *I, you, hey, hello, hi, so, yeah, ok*, etc. It no longer signifies that these words are in English but rather as a routine form of pronunciation and word choice in their daily vocabulary. These words have become what Rodolfo Jacobson termed in his book as *nativized English*. In other words, through the use of CS, the characters simply substitute Malay words or phrases to English for the purpose of communication. CS makes it easier for them to communicate with each other. It is also an unconscious act they (urbanites) have routinized since at young due to their background and/or the community where they live. Therefore it is simply natural for them to code-switch in their daily communication.

As for the movie, by implementing an idea (scenes for the movie) and interjecting it with dialogues specially developed for that scene, the functions of CS is cleverly done. Subsequently, it gives the movie a sense of credibility; portraying actual lifestyles of Malaysians through media communication. Perhaps by using the macro and micro functions of CS, this movie became more believable, free from the cliché of typical Malay movie dialogue, thus favourable to local audiences. Due to the movie's natural flow of conversation mirroring young

urban dwellers, it has become clear that making commercial movies need not conform to stereotypes, political influence nor bureaucrats.

5. Conclusion

The findings show that the language shifts not just from Bahasa Melayu to English but also from English to Bahasa Melayu.

Table 4: The Macro and Micro Functions of Code-switching in the movie *Gol & Gincu*

Macro functions	Micro functions
Code-switching for Speech Accommodation	Changes in words, terms or phrases either English to Malay or Malay to English, to reiterate repair and/or correct clarification emphasize simplification coinage/nativized
Code-switching as the Construction of Group Identity	Usage of words, terms or phrases either English to Malay or Malay to English, to establish relationship establish solidarity create equality ascertain status

The language shift from one language to another and vice-versa showed that both languages are in good standing with all the speakers. If it were not, then it would not be used so rampantly. Hence, five conclusions are assumed:

CS was done on purpose in the movie. Even though the movie is fictional, CS was done with such fluidity unlike typical scripted dialogues of other movies. This might be due to the selection of actors and actresses, who in reality subconsciously code-switches in their daily communication consequently their characters personifies that usage. It can be assumed that the function of code-switching in the movie *Gol & Gincu* reflects the existing Malaysian society because it is modelled by the present Malaysian communicative social discourse. The use of CS is not derogation to the status of the Malay language; it is just an extension of its variety, making it a rich and unique language. Although it has to be monitored accordingly, it is the preferable way to communicate from the time this study was done to the present.

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